THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Communications charges a licence fee of Rs. 100/- and royalty of Rs. 4800/- per annum per link for communication over a distance of 50 to 60 Kms. But for fishing vessels, only Rs. 250/- per annum per vessel as licence fee (on royalty), which is quite moderate, is charged for issue of Maritime Mobile Station licence.

Foodgrains scam

3135. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 19th August, 2002 under the caption "Grains meant for poor sold for profit";

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether any enquiry has been initiated in the matter to bring culprits to book; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYANYADAV): (a) to (d) The State Government of Jharkhand has already done the needful in the matter.

Excessive use of fertilizers and insecticides

†3136. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that farmers are using more than the required quantity of fertilizers and insecticides;

(b) if so, whether any concerted efforts are being made for educating the farmers, about the ill-effects of usage of fertilizers and inseticides, optimum use of underground water and other resources, for increasing yield; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The average consumption of fertilizeres and pesticides in the country is only 90 Kg/ha and 0.57 kg/ha (active ingredient), respectively during 2001-02. This level of consumption is not considered as excessive.

(b) and (c) The Government is promoting soil test based balanced and integrated use of chemical fertilizers, organic manure and biofertilizers and also Integrated pest management programmes for the judicious and need-based use of pesticides. Besides, Government is also implementing a scheme "On-farm Water Management for increasing Crop Production in Eastern India" for optimal utilization of underground water resources for crop productivity.

Growth rate of food production

3137. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what it is the present growth rate of food production, in terms of population growth, in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that the growth rate shows a downward trend for the first time, after independence;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government would consider to supply foodgrains stored in the godowns, free of cost to the poor, to prevent starvation death incidents;

(e) whether it is a fact that the FCI godowns in Kerala are piled with foodgrains; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The compound growth rate of production of foodgrains for the period 1990-91 to 1999-2000 is 1.94% as against the average annual exponential growth rate of population of 1.93% (provisional) for the decade ending 2001.